

Pauls Soul Panting

FOR

A BETTER LIFE.

A

Sermon Preached at *Lotharstock* in
the County of Northampton,
Jan. 25. 1654.

At the Funeral of that faithful Servant in
Christ, Master *John Bellamy*, late Collonel of a
Regiment of Foot. belonging to the famous
City of *London*. With a brief Narration of
his Life and Death.

By *RICHARD RESBURY*, Minister of the Gospel
at *Oundle* in *Northamptonshire*.

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the three Lions in Corn-hill, over against
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Paul's Soul Printing

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A BETTER LIFE

Common Pheasant at Loughbrickan

the Court of Admiralty

in service to justice: to launch a

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

City of London, 17th March 1881.

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BY RICHARD A. MANN, M.D., F.R.C.P.

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the Council

Ministers, or Christians, were the men of his intimacy, and familiarity. I might have added his excellent temper of spirit in his late Sickness, when under the most grinding pains, and saddest disturbances, so submissive and content with his Father's hand, which time affording, this now he was in God's way, making use of means, he was fully content with his condition, and that he was well, so far as he was as God would have him to be.

This and much more I might insist upon, but I forbear, and shall now turn me from the dead to the living, and endeavour to speak something that may be of use to us, in reference to the day of death from that text of Scripture.

1 PHILIP. XXIII.

Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is farre better.

Where we have, First, The Apostles desire of death (*Desire to depart*).

Secondly, The reason of that desire (*and to be with Christ*).

Thirdly, The further Explication (*which is farre better*).

For the First, *Desire to depart*; the word *depart* translated to depart, signifies properly, to looke from the Harbour; a Metaphor from Seafarers in a foreign Country, desirous to weigh Anchor thence, and to sail home.

Now Christians in this life are like Seafarers, wind-bound in foreign Countries, desirous thence to looke, and to make for their own Country.

Three things here.

1. This World is to Christians a foreign Country, they Pilgrims, Strangers, and Sojourners here. Abraham even in the promised Land, his proper Inheritance, yet a stranger, Hebrews 11. 9. By faith he sojourned in the Land of Promise, in a strange Country, dwelling in Tabernacles, with Isaac and Jacob, the Heir

with him of the same principles. The Inhabitants of this World are of a different Spirit, Language, Manners, Commerce, from the Saints; of the one Carnal, of the other Spiritual; of the one Earthly, of the other Heavenly; Of the one pure, of the other impure: And what is the usual lot of Strangers in a foreign Country, the same is the lot of the Saints in this World; they have many Innes, and few Friends; meet with much abuse, and hard measure from the World.

2. Heaven is their home; thence is their Nativity, born from above; thence their inheritance, Children of the Kingdoms thither they are to return, as to the place of their abiding; in the presence of their Father, and communion with all their Brethren, from the beginning to the end of the World.

3. They are desirous hence to depart, and to set sayl for home, accounting themselves whilst detained in this World as persons Wind-bound in foreign Coasts from their desired Voyage home.

Thus Abraham their Father, Heb. II. 10. For he looked for a City which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Thus the Seed of Abraham, in the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth verses of the same. They confess that they were Strangers and Pilgrims upon earth, vers. 13. and declared plainly that they sought a Country, vers. 14. not mindful of the Country whence they came, vers. 15. but desiring a better, that is an heavenly, vers. 16. Thus the Apostle in another Metaphor, in 2 Cor. chap. 5. vers. 1, 2, 3, 4. For we know, that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, vers. 1. For in this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; &c. See the rest that follows.

Use 1. A discovery of such as are so fixt in their desires to this life, they are farre from desiring death, they are at home in this World, as to their affections, in their spirits, nothing lets

less than Strangers, and Pilgrims, and Sojourners here: they are not of the Society of the Saints, they have neither Abraham's spirit, nor the spirit of his Children; they are the men of this World, in opposition to the Children of the Kingdom.

: **Cate.** Let the Saints labour more and more after this
 Spirit; Oh to look at themselves as **Forrainers** here, at this
 World as a strange Country, at the things of this World, as
 things of little concernment to them, at their condition in
 this World as a condition of unrest and danger; many Insaes,
 temptations, afflictions here daily sending; at Communion
 with this World as Communion with strangers, at the Spirit's Lan-
 guage, manners of this World, all as displeasing and re-
 vein; at their destination in this World, as cross Winds to
 hinder their desired Voyage home; at Heaven as their Coun-
 try, and stir up their desires after their Voyage home. O
 that the Lord would send a fair Wind and loose me from this
 forrein Country; O that he would pull up the stakes, and
 loose the Cords of this Tabernacle, and take it down.
 But further ground of this we shall have from the next Do-
 ctrine.

Diff. 3. Therefore do the Saints desire to depart hence by Death, that they may be with Christ in Heaven, which is farre better for them, than still to abide in this life.

[illegible]

one that mortally might be swallowed up of life. This, according to the Soul having now put off the body, Heb. 12. 22. To the spirits of just men made perfect. Their spirits now made perfect in Heaven; not the whole man, body and soul, together till the Resurrection. 2 Corin. 5. 6, 8. Knowing, that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. Writing farther to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord; This presence then with the Lord till the Day of Judgement, is not in the body, but out of the body.

Hence their Error who teach either that the Soul sleeps till the Day of Judgement, or that the Souls of the Saints go into Purgatory. If the spirits of just men be in Heaven, be in a state of perfection, they do nothing less than sleep; and for Purgatory, the Torments of it are too inconsistent with that Blessedness which the Saints enjoy immediately after death. Revel. 14. 13. Blessed are the dead which dye in the Lord, from hence forth, you said the Spirit, that they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. Lazarus at his death, His soul was carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom.

Therefore they desire to dye, that they may be with Christ, not because they cannot have their fill of worldly enjoyments, nor because they meet with so many worldly Crosses in the World, These are Carnal grounds; but because they desire to be with Christ, the Spirit saith, Come, as the espoused Virgin desires to be at home with her Husband.

It is the enjoyment of Christ that makes Heaven it self desirable, Coloss. 3. 1. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; that Christ is there, is the great Motive to seek the things that are there, or that lead thither. Christ who was Crucified for them, with him they desire to be, their love is Crucified, Christ to whom they are espoused, in his presence is their life. Cant. 8. 14. Make bless my Beloved, and be thou like to a Rose, or to a young Fawn upon the mountains of spices. This is the voice of the true Church of Christ, breathing out her desires of enjoying him.

Obj. But are they not with Christ here, have they not spiritual union and communion with him?

Asw. Yes; but their enjoyment of him here Comparative-ly is no enjoyment, hence absent from the Lord here, saith the Apostle, yet they have neer union with him, and pure communion with him, but nothing to that which shall be.

3 Therefore they desire to dye, that they may be with Christ, as that which is farre better than to abide in the Flesh; the en-joyment of Christ here farre above all other enjoyments, *My soul is filled as with marrow, &c. Thy loving kindness is better, &c. Whom have I in heaven, &c.* But the enjoyment of him there far above this, farre better hence to be translated. This we shall shew in Five particulars.

1 There the fulness of his presence, here some small glimpses. Here he shews himself through the Lattice, there with open face; Here sometimes he affords, sometimes with-draws his presence, there he always affords it; Here, yet a little while and you shall see me, &c. there always see him. Here sometimes clear, sometimes cloudy, sometimes day in the light of his Countenance, sometime night in the hiding of it, there al-ways clear, always day. Now if the glimpses of his presence be so comfortable here, as *Psalm 63. 1, 2. O-God thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. To see thy power and thy glory, as I have seen thee in the Sanctuary.* And *Psalm 84. 1, 2. How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts. My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God. How ravishing shall the fulness of his presence there be?*

2 There the full Communication of his love, here much restraint of it; the length, breadth, Depth, height of this love of Christ which here passeth knowledge, Electing love, Redeeming love, Converting love, Adopting love, &c. there fully communicated; here our hearts too narrow vessels to re-ceive the fulness of his love, it is in the breast of Christ as a mighty Sea, but flows into our hearts as into a narrow

Chanel, there our hearts enlarged, our vessels made bigger ; Here some hints of his love, some small significations interchangeable with the tokens of his displeasure, there the fulness of it without change. Now if the seals and earnest of Gods love by the Spirit of Adoption in our hearts here, be so sweet, the white Stone, the hidden Manna, Rev. 2. 17. what shall bee the full enjoyment of it there ?

3 There the fulness of his purity ; here how much is wanting to us ? We as the Moon receive light from the Sun, but our conversion as at her first appearance after the Change ? how much of the old Moon, how much Dark still, how little a part enlightened ? at the best here we reach not the first quarter, there as in the Full all enlightened, all-over pure, not one dark spot, nothing of the Old Man, nothing of Corruption left ; the whole Soul full of the Image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, filled with all the fulness of God.

4 There the fulness of peace and joy in his presence ; Here so many Crosses, many outward Troubles, many inward, the Lustings of Sin, the guilt of Sin, the sense of Gods displeasure, the fear of wrath, all interruptions of our peace, eclipsed our joy, but there all these things are done away, in the fulness of his love, and in the fulness of his purity, fulness of peace and joy ? If here joy unspeakable and full of glory, what there ?

5 There the fulness of his glory, here hardly any foot-steps of glory, so little appearance of it here, that the Apostle tells us, it doth not yet appear what we shall be, 1 Job. 3. 2. Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And that life is yet hid with Christ in God, Colos. 3. 3. Yee are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God ; but then shall we be Companions with Christ in his glory, vers. 4. When Christ who in our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory ; full of his glory, Job. 17. 12. And the glory that thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one.

What a wonderful glory shall this be! No wonder now if the Saints, to whom by the Spirit are revealed the things that are freely given them of God, desire to be dissolved, &c.

V/c. To aym at this height of a Christian spirit, to desire to dye. O that we could say, Were we put to our choice, we had rather be hence translated, than here abide; but then upon this ground only that we might be with Christ in Heaven, and there have that farre better enjoyment of him than here we can have, in the fulness of his presence, love, purity, peace, glory.

That love which should be in us to Christ requires love desires full enjoyment, and to please fully. Is Jesus Christ the beloved of our souls, as the Church in the *Canticles* professeth often, are our souls espoused to him as chaste Virgins? 2 Cor. 11. 2. *I have espoused you to one Husband; that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ.* Do we through love desire to meet him, and do we bask in his presence, in his Ordinances here, are the first fruits sweet unto our taste? Can we say with *Ignatius*, My love is crucified? with the Church in the *Canticles*, *We are sick of love?* (O that we could) with the Apostle from our inward say, *If any man love not the Lord Jesus let him be Anathema, Maranatha?* How can it then be that this desire should not be at the top of our desires? Do we desire in all things to please Christ, as it is the property of love so to do? Love seeks not her own, and do we find by hourly experience that we cannot but do the things that are displeasing in his sight, whilst here in the body, how upon this account shall not our love to him work this desire in us?

It is our own great advantage, but not our great advantage to abide in the fulness of his presence, in whose presence is the fulness of joy? To have the full fruition of his love, whose loving kindness is better than life? To have such full communion with him in his holiness, as it shall be no longer possible for us to sin? Our souls now so defiled, then pure as the blessed Angels? To have the full-

ness of peace and glory, which the glorious Angels, which Christ himself is possessed of; and which we shall have.

To bathe in those rivers of eternal pleasures, to have an eternal Summer without any Winter, and eternal Day without any Night, &c.

To have the full of all our Hopes, Desires, Prayers, the Promises of God, and above what hath entered into mans heart.

We must needs conclude that we are below this desire, it is our infirmity, and indeed much sinned in it; for whence proceeds it?

1. From want of love to Christ.

2. From much love of the World, and the things of this present life, relations, possessions here.

3. From the imperfection of our holiness, that our contrariety to sin dwelling in us is no higher, and wee no more troubled at it.

4. From our low and weak apprehensions, and thence our undervaluation of the presence, love, purity, peace, and glory of Christ.

5. From the secret sting of a guilty Conscience, nouriished by liberty of sinning and unbelief. Let us therefore labour after this desire more and more, having seen such pregnant grounds for it.

One Caution, Though this should be our desire and propension of soul, yet,

1. Are we thankfully to accept the continuation of this present life in the World as a blessing from God, and to own long life as a great blessing; wee deserve Death according to the first institution of it; that is, as a stroke in wrath from the hand of God eternally destroying.

2. Because the longer our life here, the more time of service to God in this World, and being instrumental to his glory amongst men, and helpful to our near relations.

